

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EC HARMONIZATION OF GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT--TELE-
COMMUNICATIONS

REF: A) EC BRUSSELS 961

B) EC BRUSSELS 8314, OCT. 24, 1974

1. SUMMARY: THE EC COMMISSION HAS SENT THE EC COUNCIL A DRAFT RESOLUTION WHICH CALLS UPON THE COUNCIL TO SUPPORT THE HARMONIZATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONFERENCE EUROPEENNE DES ADMINISTRATIONS DES POSTES ET DES TELECOMMUNICATIONS (CEPT). THE COMMISSION HAS DECIDED THAT THE HARMONIZATION OF THE EUROPEAN TELCOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, WHICH IS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE EVENTUAL APPLICATION OF THE EC'S DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON GOVERNMENT PROCURMENT TO THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR, TAKE PLACE IN THE CEPT. END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL A AND EARLIER CABLES, ONE OF THE MAJOR OUTSTANDING ISSUES PREVENTING EC COUNCIL AGREEMENT ON THE DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON GOVERNMENT PROCURMENT IS WHETHER THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ECTOR SHOULD BE INCLUDED OR EXCLUDED FROM THE SCOPE OF THE DRAFT DIRECTIVE. THE COMMISSION'S APPROACH TO THIS PROBLEM, AS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL B, WAS TO BRING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR GRADUALLY UNDER THE DRAFT DIRECTIVE CONJOINTLY WITH THE MARMONIZATION OF EQUIPMENT MAKING UP
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TH NEXT GENERATION OF TELCOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS.

FOLLOWING ALONG THESE SAME LINES, THE EC COMMISSION HAS SENT THE EC COUNCIL A COMMUNICATION WHICH CONTAINS A DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL WHICH WOULD HAVE THE COUNCIL GIVE ITS SUPPORT TO THE HARMONIZATION OF THE MEMBER STATES' TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONFERENCE EUROPEENNE DES ADMINISTRATIONS DES POSTES ET DES TELECOMMUNICATIONS (CEPT), AN ORGANIZATION CONSISTING OF TWENTY-SIX WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

3. THE COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATION POINTS OUT THAT (A) THE DIFFERING CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS CREATES SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTIES FOR THE GROWTH OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE; (B) THESE DIFFERENCES INHIBIT INTRA-EUROPEAN TRADE IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT; (C) THE SEPARATION OF NATIONAL MARKETS AFFECTS THE STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY AND ITS ABILITY TO COMPETE ON A WORLD BASIS. IT THEN NOTES THAT THE TELECOMMUNICATION ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE MEMBER STATES HAVE AGREED TO THE NEED FOR HARMONIZATION AND FOR TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS WHICH ARE WORKING ON INTERNATIONAL PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS. TO OBTAIN THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM TECHNICAL STANDARDS WHICH OPEN UP THE LARGEST POSSIBLE EUROPEAN MARKET THE COMMISSION PROPOSES THAT HARMONIZATION SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN THE CEPT.

4. THE COMMISSION IS SEEING THE COUNCIL'S EXPLICIT SUPPORT FOR THE WORK IN THE CEPT BECAUSE IT WOULD GIVE IMPETUS TO THE WORK OF THE CEPT AND BECAUSE HARMONIZATION WILL EVENTUALLY REQUIRE POLITICAL DECISIONS. ANOTHER REASON IS THAT MAJOR RESOURCES OF SKILLED MANPOWER WILL HAVE TO BE COMMITTED BY THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATIONS OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS. THE RESOLUTION WOULD ALSO HAVE THE COUNCIL AGREE THAT THE COMMISSION, AS SUCH, PARTICIPATE IN THE HARMONIZATION WORK OF THE CEPT.

5. COPIES OF THE COMMISSION COMMUNICATION AND DRAFT
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COUNCIL RESOLUTION WERE TRANSMITTED TO EUR-RPE, ATTENTION HARDING AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ATTENTION DAUMAN ON MARCH 25.

6. COMMENT: IN THE ABSENCE OF COMMISSION AND PERM REP OFFICIALS BECAUSE OF THE EASTER HOLIDAYS, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THE ATTITUDES OF THE MEMBER STATES TOWARD THE RESOLUTION NOR

ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON US INTERESTS. OUR FIRST
REACTION IS THAT HARMONIZATION AT THE CEPT LEVEL
COULD DIFFUSE TO SOME DEGREE THE TENDENCY OF COM-
MISSION OFFICIALS AND CERTAIN MEMBER STATES TO WORK
TOWARD "COMMUNITY" SOLUTIONS THAT WOULD BE INIMICALBLE
TO US COMMERCIAL INTERESTS. THE CEPT MAY ALSO BE
MORE EASILY INFLUENCED BY HARMONIZATION IN THE TELE-
COMMUNICATIONS FIELD THAT MAY BE TAKING PLACE AT A
BROADER INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. IN ANY EVENT, IT WOULD
BE USEFUL TO HAVE USG REACTIONS TO THIS DEVELOPMENT.
THERE IS PRESUMABLY ALSO SOME US INTEREST IN THE CON-
TEXT OF THE STANDARDS WORK IN THEM TN. GREENWALD

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